

23rd March 1934]

III.—A BILL FURTHER TO AMEND THE MADRAS ESTATES LAND ACT, 1908, FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES (BILL No. 12 OF 1931).

* The Hon. Sir MAHOMED USMAN:—" Mr. President, Sir, may I with your permission, move that item * No. I on the agenda be taken up for consideration after all the other items on the agenda are disposed of."

The Hon. Diwan Bahadur Sir M. KRISHNAN NAYAR:—" I second it, Sir."

The motion was agreed to.

IV.—DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS FOR 1933-34.

GRANT I—LAND REVENUE—RESERVED.

* The Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL:—" Mr. President, Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move—

' that Government be granted a further sum not exceeding Rs. 65,300 under Grant I—Land Revenue—Reserved.'

" Sir, this sum is made up of two items, one relating to Survey and Settlement—Professional Survey parties—Pay of establishments and amounting to Rs. 17,400; and the other relating to Assignments and Compensations—Other charges and amounting to Rs. 47,900. The increase under the first head is due to revised estimates based upon the actual requirements. This increase is partly due to the fact that when the Board of Revenue submitted their original estimates, we made a reduction in the sum which was mentioned by the Board of Revenue on account of probable savings based on a comparison of actuals with estimates in previous years with reference to these savings and following the precedents of previous years, a lump sum reduction of Rs. 25,100 was made. In making this reduction, the fact that on the abolition of a large number of temporary posts as a result of the reduction in the number of Survey parties, most of the permanent men holding higher temporary posts would revert to their substantive appointments and would draw higher permanent pay than those who acted for them before, was taken into account. The Board of Revenue has explained that the establishment according to the number statement submitted with its original Budget estimates had been working throughout the year, and thus the probable saving anticipated by the Government had not actually accrued. The post of Sub-Assistant Director of Survey ordered to be abolished was retained during 1933-34 under orders passed in May 1933 for work in connexion with the survey of two blocks in the Cauvery-Mettur Project area in the Tanjore district. Another item of increase under this head is due to excess expenditure of Rs. 3,100 on account of boundary pillars and hired labour.

" The second item covers increase of Rs. 1,000 under malikhanas and Rs. 46,900 on account of other charges. The latter includes assignments to local bodies of fishery rents collected by the Revenue

* Reconsideration of the Bill further to amend the Madras Estates Land Act, 1908, for certain purposes (Bill No. 12 of 1931).

[Sir Archibald Campbell] [23rd March 1934]

Department and expenditure under this head is expected to amount to Rs. 35,000 between January and March 1934. The nature of the expenditure under all these items is subject to fluctuations and it is very difficult to estimate the requirements correctly in advance."

11-15 a.m. * The Hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I wish to know how the cut motion given notice of by Mr. Basheer Ahmed, to reduce the allotment by Rs. 100, to urge the postponement of giving effect to the resettlement rates in the Salem district is relevant to the issue."

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"This shortage of money is put under the head Survey and Settlement. The increase is mainly under Pay and Establishments. The establishment is based on actual requirements. We are not now concerned with the next year. In the current year it is only with regard to survey and settlement that this demand arises. If they are going to give effect to the proposals they will require further money. I want to say that they need not incur extra expenditure so far as the district of Salem is concerned. If they abandon the operations, they can have a saving. That is my point, Sir."

* The Hon. the PRESIDENT:—"My fear is if there is any proposal in this cut motion asking for any reduction on the ground of increase of establishment, it will be quite in order. On the other hand, if the whole principle of the postponement of settlement operations is taken up, district after district will come forward and probably another Budget discussion will have to take place. That is exactly my fear and so it is not in order."

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"My next point is to impress the need for having all proprietary estates surveyed and to afford survey facilities to those proprietors."

* The Hon. the PRESIDENT:—"That brings in a new principle altogether and I do not think a supplementary demand is a proper place for that."

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"I can speak on the Demand, Sir."

* The Hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I will have to stop the hon. Member if he speaks of settlement rates in Salem."

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"Sir, I wish to point out that the Government should make certain exceptions in certain districts at any rate. If the whole survey policy is not to be revised, at least in certain districts, considering the circumstances and the present conditions prevailing, they can postpone giving effect to the settlement proposals in a particular district. What is required is, Sir, that whatever they have done so far, they need not go on incurring further expenditure and come forward with supplementary demands. If they would pursue a policy of stopping where they have gone and then reconsider the whole question at least in particular districts and peculiar circumstances, that will be in the interests of economy. I want not to speak

23rd March 1934] [Mr. Basheer Ahmed Sayeed]

on the general question of the poor ryots, but I want that the Government need not be going on increasing their settlement operations. They must stop without incurring any further expenditure in surveying areas. They could attend to areas which require survey on the proprietary estates. I want Government to view this favourably by way of curtailing expenditure instead of increasing expenditure."

* The Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL:—"Mr. President, Sir, I have before explained on the floor of the House that we regard it necessary to carry on the present system of land revenue and settlement as long as the present form of administration is in force; otherwise it is impossible to ensure that each district shall pay its fair share of the land revenue. The system involves a re-examination about the incidence of land revenue taxation in each area once in thirty years and it is desirable that we should carry on that re-examination. It may involve an increase in taxation in particular areas but it does sometimes involve reduction. There have been instances in which reductions has been made. So, the question whether any enhancement of rates of assessment is to be brought into force immediately or postponed is a matter for consideration with reference to the situation existing at the time when the new rates should come into force. I may point out that the imposition of additional rates is not the only effect of a resettlement. We undertake at resettlement a very careful examination of the economic condition of the ryots in each district. It is most desirable in my opinion that the Government should make a very careful examination of the economic condition of the people from time to time."

The Demand was put and carried and the Grant was made.

GRANT X—SECRETARIAT AND HEADQUARTER ESTABLISHMENTS—
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION AND MISCELLANEOUS—RESERVED.

* The Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL:—"On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I move—

'that the Government be granted a further sum not exceeding Rs. 1,35,200 under Grant X—Secretariat and Headquarter Establishments—District Administration and Miscellaneous—Reserved.'

"Sir, this sum is made up of seven items as is explained in the note which has been placed before the House. I do not think that I need go through every one of these items in detail, but there is one large item about which perhaps I may give the House some more information, that is the fourth item 'Pay of officers,' Rs. 74,000. There is very little information given under that head in the note placed before the House. The first reason for this large increase is the fact that more officers of the provincial civil service have been in charge of divisions reserved for officers of the Indian Civil Service; that means a saving to Government on the whole. Secondly, the pay of special

[Sir Archibald Campbell] [23rd March 1934]

deputy collectors for land acquisition work for local bodies is debitable to this head. Thirdly a certain number of senior deputy collectors have been reverted to the ordinary line from the co-operative department, that has had the effect of replacing some junior officers in the Revenue Department by these senior officers. Fourthly an additional special deputy collector was employed for Estates Land Act work in the Ramnad district. I think, Sir, there is no other item about which I need go into detail unless hon. Members wish to have further information than is given in the note."

The Demand was put and carried and the Grant was made.

GRANT XI—MINISTERS, CIVIL SECRETARIATS AND MISCELLANEOUS—
TRANSFERRED.

* The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move—

'that the Government be granted a further sum not exceeding Rs. 64,300 under Grant XI—Ministers, Civil Secretariats and Miscellaneous—Transferred.'

"The extra expenditure as regards the Ministers' travelling allowance this year over the amount budgeted for is mainly due to the Ministers' tours to Simla and Delhi which were unexpected and could not be provided for in the Budget. The figures will show that even this increase is much less than the travelling allowance incurred in 1930-31. The excess expenditure of Rs. 6,100 is due to payment of leave salaries to Assistant Secretaries and the appointment of a special temporary Assistant Secretary during the absence on leave of the Secretary, the employment of temporary special establishment in connexion with the examination of the financial position of the taluk boards and the amendment of the Madras City Municipal Act and the payment of travelling allowance to a Special Officer for his journey to Simla as a representative of the Road-Rail Conference and the travelling allowance of the Special Officer for the abolition of taluk boards. Under the head 'General Administration' the cost of Rs. 800 is due to the excess expenditure on postage owing to the large number of circulars issued to the panchayats. Under the head 'General Administration' the excess expenditure of Rs. 46,400 relates to amounts forfeited during elections. The question as to whether the Government or the local bodies should get the money was not decided. It has been since decided that as the cost of the elections is met by the local bodies it was therefore fair that the deposits should go to the local bodies. It was originally considered that this could be done by an abatement of the charges recoverable from local bodies. It is now considered that the simpler procedure would be to move for the supplementary grant."

11-30 a.m. Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"Mr. President, I do not propose to move my cut motion, or that part of it touching on the travelling

23rd March 1934] [Mr. Basheer Ahmed Sayeed]

allowance of Ministers, in view of the fact that the Hon. Minister has already given the details saying that the extra expenditure for the Ministerial tour was due to the tour to Delhi. Certainly it was unexpected and no one could have provided for it in the Budget. But I may suggest one thing in this connexion. As has been remarked by the Accountant-General time and again, the progress of expenditure may be watched and a programme of Ministers' tours may be drawn up in advance and on that basis, for the purpose of the Budget, calculations may be made. The progress of expenditure from month to month should be available to the Finance Department, and, on the basis of that, if calculations are made and funds allotted, it should be possible not to exceed the allotted amount. I want the Finance Department to keep a close watch over the expenditure and when as it comes up.

"Now, Sir, my second reason for giving notice of the cut motion is to urge upon making adequate provision for the employment of taluk board clerks on the abolition of taluk boards."

* The Hon. the PRESIDENT:—"How does that question come under this Grant?"

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"Sir, this is one of the several items making up the Grant."

* The Hon. the PRESIDENT:—"Which item?"

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"Item 6, Sir, which speaks of probable expenditure on travelling allowance likely to be drawn by the Special Officer to be appointed in connexion with the abolition of taluk boards. My motion is covered by this item."

* The Hon. the PRESIDENT:—"But what connexion has this item with the re-employment of taluk board clerks?"

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"Sir, the Special Officer is going to make arrangements in connexion with the organization of the district boards in consequence of the abolition of taluk boards. It is stated that it is the intention that the absorption of the taluk board employees should also be considered by the Special Officer. It seems to me that he should therefore examine the question how far the ex-employees could be absorbed and what arrangement should be made for the purpose. I hope the Special Officer has to do that and advise the Government, but if it is not part of the duties of this officer, I shall not speak on that. I would wait for an answer from the Hon. Minister."

* The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"Sir, for the purpose of finding out whether taluk board employees are to be provided for, I believe it is not necessary for the Special Officer to tour in the districts. He will have other work to do. As regards this, we have addressed district boards and taluk boards to let us have detailed information as to the number of clerks at present employed, the number who could be absorbed and the number who will be in excess for a temporary period. The

[The Raja of Bobbili]

[23rd March 1934]

expenditure which may be involved in the travelling allowance of the Special Officer will not be incurred in connexion with the staff of the taluk boards."

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"Sir, I submit that if you are going to rule that this question does not come under item 6, it would come under item 4 which speaks of the examination of the financial position of taluk boards and the amendment of the Madras City Municipal Act, 1919. The re-employment of ex-taluk board clerks will come under this."

* The Hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I think the Hon. Minister said just now that the purpose for which the Special Officer is going to be appointed is not to examine the question of reinstating the employees of taluk boards, but to examine the financial aspects of the abolition of the taluk boards. I think that is what the Hon. Minister said."

Diwan Bahadur B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—"Sir, this appointment question cropped up this year after the passing of the Taluk Boards Abolition Bill. The duties which are entrusted to him, as laid down in the communiqué, are that from the headquarters here he should call upon the various local bodies for certain returns and issue instructions to them to give effect to the Government proposals. Though it may be that in his tours the Special Officer may not be directly keeping in touch with the question of the re-employment of these clerks, even sitting at headquarters he will have to consider the various reports of taluk board presidents and advise Government in regard to the re-employment of these men and so on. All that the Hon. the Chief Minister has said is that his tours will not be specially for this purpose alone. He did not say that the Special Officer during his tours will not consider this question. He did not say that the Special Officer will be prevented from discussing this question with the taluk board officials to see how best their difficulty may be solved. Further there is the question of the temporary establishment newly created also coming under this Grant. The cut motion therefore would come under the duties of the Special Officer, either on tour or at headquarters. Lastly, the Government will have to consider in appointing this Special Officer the duties to be entrusted to him. Under this category also, this motion will come. On these three points this motion will be relevant."

* The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"I have no objection to the discussion of this point. What I have stated is that the tours of the Special Officer will not be undertaken for the purpose of deciding the future of these taluk board employees. This is one of the duties which he has to attend to at headquarters. But, as we are not now concerned with the salary of the Special Officer this question, I think, will not be relevant."

... Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"Mr. President, my point is only this: that the Minister having appointed the Special Officer and a

23rd March 1934] [Mr. Basheer Ahmed Sayeed]

temporary staff to examine the financial position of the taluk boards, he should see that some equitable rules are framed to do justice to the aggrieved taluk board employees who are going to be thrown out of employment by reason of the abolition of the taluk boards. I have already come to know that, ever since the Press Communiqué was issued, saying that the taluk boards are going to be abolished, some district board presidents are exercising the power, which they now have but which they will not have, after orders have been passed by the Government on the subject, to confirm all probationers and temporary employees who are their favourites and also increasing the allowances and salaries wherever possible. I understand that in particular districts, anticipating the results of the abolition of taluk boards and notwithstanding the Government orders issued, several employees on probation, etc., have been confirmed with a view to shut out any possibility of the senior district board employees serving in taluk boards being retained in preference to them. I suggest that Government should not ratify the appointments made in such circumstances. Sir, before any further action is taken by the district board presidents in this connexion, I would request the Government to expedite the issue of rules on the lines of those issued in connexion with the re-entertainment of men thrown out on account of retrenchment. The Government should see that all the present taluk board employees who were originally in district board offices are absorbed as early as possible and that all the permanent employees of the taluk boards before the reorganization are taken into the district board establishments. If this is not done, people who have 20 or 25 years' service to their credit would lose the reward for their long service and persons who have not even completed their probation will take their places. I think this should not be permitted. I therefore want the Government to take the House into their confidence and tell us what exactly their proposals are and how they would rectify the existing state of affairs which has been brought about by some of the unscrupulous presidents of district boards. I do not mean any reflection on them. But it is a fact that they anticipated the Government order and did certain things which go clean against the Government order. I want Government to call for such cases and rectify the situation and also prevent further mischief. As there are a few days or weeks more for the Act to come into force, there is room for some more mischief being done. I want the Government to take steps to prevent further abuse of their powers by the district board presidents. With these few words, I move—

'to reduce the allotment of Rs. 64,300 for Ministers—Civil Secretariats and Miscellaneous—Transferred, by Rs. 100'."

* The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"Sir, my hon. Friend himself has mentioned that the Government have issued certain orders on this matter and, if any president has acted in violation of the Government Orders in question, they will not be recognized as valid. Of course

[The Raja of Bobbili]

[23rd March 1934]

Government are very much alive to the fact that in some cases the presidents might try to get round the rules and they are keeping careful watch over these matters. If any such case comes to the notice of Government, they will certainly take necessary action. As I have already stated, during the progress of the Bill, the Government will adopt all possible measures to see that as little hardship as possible is done to the taluk board employees."

The cut motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

The Demand was then put and carried and the Grant was made.

GRANT XII—ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE—RESERVED.

The Hon. Diwan Bahadur Sir M. KRISHNAN NAYAR:—"Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I move—

'that the Government be granted a further sum not exceeding Rs. 93,500 under Grant XVI—Administration of Justice—Reserved.'

"The facts which necessitate this motion are all stated in the note that has been circulated to hon. Members."

The Demand was put and carried and the Grant was made.

GRANT XIII—JAILS—RESERVED.

11-45
a.m.

* The Hon. Diwan Bahadur Sir M. KRISHNAN NAYAR:—"Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move—

'that Government be granted a further sum not exceeding Rs. 100 under Grant XIII—Jails—Reserved.'

"In this case also the facts that necessitate this motion are all set out in the note that has been circulated to the Members of the House. The amount that is actually required is only Rs. 360, and I can find this amount by appropriation from the amount already sanctioned. But as this is a new service, as stated in the note, a specific vote of the Legislative Council is required, and so I move this token motion."

The Demand was put and carried and the Grant was made.

GRANT XXVIII—MISCELLANEOUS DEPARTMENTS—TRANSFERRED.

The Hon. Diwan Bahadur S. KUMARASWAMI REDDIYAR:—"Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move—

'that Government be granted a further sum not exceeding Rs. 34,600 under Grant XXVIII—Miscellaneous Departments—Transferred.'

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"Mr. President, Sir, I beg to move—

'to reduce the allotment of Rs. 34,600 for Miscellaneous Departments—Transferred, by Rs. 100.'

23rd March 1934] [Mr. Basheer Ahmed Sayeed]

“ To express the hardship in insisting on typewriting qualifications for persons for ministerial posts. This typewriting qualification is not required in many ministerial departments. It is only in a few departments where this extra work is extracted from the clerks that such a necessity arises. Therefore the insistence on a knowledge of typewriting from clerks seems to be not necessary and not legitimate. There are several departments where there is absolutely no need for typewriting at all; and when such is the case, I don't know why Government should insist on a general qualification like that. As a matter of fact, there are certain sections in the Judicial department where I find typewriting and shorthand men are required, but Government are not prepared to supply them. So, what I suggest to Government is that they should not demand a knowledge of typewriting from all clerks, as it would mean serious hardship to them, but to insist on that additional qualification only from those clerks who are to be employed in such offices where such a knowledge is found essential. It is on this reason that I urge Government to revise their order.”

* Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—“ Sir, it is a matter for surprise to me how the subject of motor vehicles taxation should come under the purview of the Hon. Education Minister, as it should legitimately belong to the Chief Minister. (Mr. Basheer Ahmed Sayeed: ‘ Miscellaneous Departments.’) I should like to know why Government should pay house-rent on behalf of the Police staff employed in the matter of motor vehicles taxation. May I know why, when the department which is responsible for the supply of quarters has not chosen to do so, this department should pay house-rent for these Police officers? Also, Sir, where is the necessity for these officers, who are merely collecting agencies to travel? As regards the continuance of the temporary establishment employed in the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Traffic and Licensing, for the working of the Madras Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, I believe this comes under the portfolio of the Hon. the Home Member, and further how did the necessity arise, when the staff necessary for it had already been employed and when the extra work that has resulted on account of the Madras Motor Vehicles Taxation Act is very small as compared with the work that was already there before. I should like to have a detailed explanation on these things before I can give my vote to this Demand.”

* The Hon. Diwan Bahadur S. KUMARASWAMI REDDIYAR:—“ Sir, as regards the point raised by hon. Member, Mr. Basheer Ahmed, I can only tell him that that subject is dealt with not by me but by the Hon. Member for the services. And so far as this Demand is concerned, all that is asked for is a certain sum of money as remuneration to be paid to examiners. (Mr. Basheer Ahmed Sayeed: ‘ Yes, as these examiners have to superintend the typewriting examination, I raise the question why such a qualification is necessary from clerks.’) I may tell my hon. Friend, that the question whether such

[Mr. S. Kumaraswami Reddiyar] [23rd March 1934]

an examination should be held for clerkship's posts or not is a matter that relates to the Hon. Member for the services."

The cut motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

* The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"Sir, I take it Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti has not taken any objection to the employment of the Police staff in the matter of motor vehicles taxation. As regards the payment of house-rent, I may tell him that wherever Government quarters are not given to the Police staff, Government have to pay them house-rent. As regards the expenditure under travelling allowance, I may tell him that the officers have to do checking and inspecting work and this naturally entails tours. As regards the continuance of the temporary establishment in the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Traffic and Licensing Department, my hon. Friend was saying that the Police Department were previously doing this work, and as the work was light then the same staff could now do the additional work. For the information of my Friend and the House I may say that at present there is immense work to be done there; they have to collect taxes, send returns, go to district centres and collect money there, then make refunds wherever necessary, check the taxes levied and see whether licences have been taken in all cases and so on. We find that the present staff is overworked, and so it is but proper that this additional expenditure should be incurred."

Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"Does not this ten per cent cover the whole thing?"

* The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"No, the ten per cent refers only to the Police staff employed for working the Madras Motor Vehicles Taxation Act. This is a special staff, and this does not apply to the Police in the city."

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR:—"Sir, I wish to refer to the Government Technical Examination in typewriting. Recently the syllabus has been revised."

* The Hon. the PRESIDENT:—"That motion has been withdrawn."

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR:—"But I wish to speak on the main Demand. I was stating, Sir, that the syllabus has been revised, in that a mechanism test has been introduced, with the result that those who have passed the old lower grade test in typewriting are rendered ineligible for appointment. I wish to suggest to the Hon. Minister why not allow those candidates to sit for the 'practical test' only in the new lower grade typewriting test, so that they may become eligible for appointment as per the new rules? I believe, Sir, some time back this same question was raised, and I do not know what became of it. So, Sir, I am putting forward this suggestion once again."

* Diwan Bahadur C. S. RATNASABHAPATI MUDALIYAR:—"Sir, in connexion with the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, I wish to say a few

23rd March 1934] [Mr. C. S. Ratnasabhapaty Mudaliyar]

words. In spite of considerable amount of travelling allowance given to the Police and in spite of the scrutiny that is at present adopted, we find that there are still a large number of lorries and motor vehicles plying without licence. Further there are a large number of cars plying under trade numbers. Some of these belong to commercial firms, and they give them to private people for use under trade numbers for any number of days. Further people owning a number of cars, get licence only for two or three and with these licences they use all the cars. Similarly persons owning a number of cars also interchange their licence numbers. In this way they evade taking licence for all vehicles owned by them. Generally the Police check the cars only by their licence number, and so where there is interchange of licences, they are not able to detect cases of evasion. I request the Hon. Minister to issue orders to the Police to make a closer scrutiny in the matter, and check cars not by the car licence in relation to car number but also of engine number."

* The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"Sir, we hope that, with the introduction of special checks and improvement in the system of collections, it will be possible to reduce the number of cases of evasion. Even now periodical checks are being done and I fear, any further increase in them will not completely eliminate evasion. It would only perhaps cause annoyance to the public. As regards evasion of licence by means of trade numbers, I shall look into the matter, if particular cases are brought to my notice. With regard to the system of checking by engine licence, I shall see how far that is possible."

The Demand was put and carried and the Grant was made.

GRANT XXXIII—PENSIONS—RESERVED.

* The Hon. Sir HOPETOUN STOKES:—"Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor I beg to move—

'that Government be granted a further sum not exceeding Rs. 91,200 under Grant XXXIII—Pensions—Reserved.'

"From the explanatory note it will be seen that a larger number of officers, due to retrenchment in the last two years, have retired, and so we have to make provision for them to draw their pension. Hence the necessity for this Demand."

The Demand was put and carried and the Grant was made.

GRANT XXXV—MISCELLANEOUS—RESERVED AND TRANSFERRED.

* The Hon. Sir HOPETOUN STOKES:—"Mr. President, Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move—

'that Government be granted a further sum not exceeding Rs. 46,600 under Grant XXXV—Miscellaneous—Reserved and Transferred.'

[Sir Hopetoun Stokes]

[23rd March 1934]

“The House will find all the necessary information about these proposals in the note which has been circulated.”

12
noon.

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—“I beg to move—

‘that the Demand of Rs. 46,600 under Grant XXXV—Miscellaneous—Reserved and Transferred—be reduced by a sum of Rs. 100’.

“Sir, the object of this motion is to express disapproval of the increased rates charged in connexion with the medicines to be supplied by the Medical Stores Department to local and municipal institutions. Sir, I do not object to local and municipal bodies getting their supplies from the Military Medical Stores Department, but the position seems to be very peculiar in regard to the prices at which these medicines and other articles are supplied to local boards and municipalities. Even in the case of Corporation of Madras which is purchasing medicines and other articles from the Military Medical Stores the prices of those articles considerably vary from the prices at which the corporation buys the very same articles, of the same quality and same specification from the open market. In fact, in a few cases, I had myself occasion to test the price as given by the Medical Stores Department with regard to certain knives and the price given for the same quality by the private market was far below the price at which they were sold by the Military Stores Department. I want the Government to examine why the Military Stores Department should not be able to supply the same article and of the same quality at the same price at which it is sold in the market, if not at a lower price. If the examination of this question is taken up, I am sure it will result in some economy to local boards and municipal councils. It is true that the finances of local boards and municipalities are not so sound, but if you are going to insist on their paying extra prices for articles of the same quality by compelling them to purchase from Military Medical Stores, it does not seem to be a sound policy. It does not really go to minimise their expenditure. Either the rule that they should buy all their requirements from the Medical Stores Department should be abrogated or the Medical Stores should be made to supply articles at the market prices. I do not think there is always any difference in the quality, because the makers supply these articles to private merchants in the City of Madras and other places and they also supply the very same articles to the Military Medical Stores. Whatever it is, it ought to be possible for the Government to take up this question and make the local bodies buy at the most economical rates and not to go in for a higher rate at which these articles are supplied by the Medical Stores Department. Either there should be a revision of the existing rule or the local body must have the supply of the articles at the market rate from time to time.”

* Diwan Bahadur C. S. RATNASABHAPATI MUDALIYAR:—“My Friend, Mr. Basheer Ahmed, has not put the position quite clearly. The Medical Stores Department are charging the local bodies about 25 per cent more than what they charge Government institutions for supplying

23rd March 1934] [Mr. C. S. Ratnasabhapatil Mudaliyar]

medicines. They do not make any profit for supply to Government institutions, but they want to make much profit by supplies to local board institutions. Local bodies are quasi Government institutions and they should be supplied at the same rate as are charged to Government institutions. This invidious distinction ought not to be made. There is another hardship also in the case of local bodies. The Government not only fix a higher rate for supplying medicines, etc., to local bodies, but they also compel them to purchase these articles from the Government Medical Stores and not from anybody else, even when they cost less than the rate of the Medical Stores. The quality may be superior to or it may be at least as good as those supplied by the Medical Stores, and yet local bodies are forced to purchase them from the Stores Department paying higher cost. Is it not very unfair on the part of Government? So, I would ask the Government not to make any distinction but to treat local bodies on a par with other departments of the Government and see that medicines are supplied to them by the Medical Stores at the same rate as they are supplied to other Government institutions."

Diwan Bahadur M. GOPALASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" I beg to endorse every word that has been said by my hon. Friend, Mr. Ratnasabhapatil Mudaliyar. It has also been my experience that the local bodies are being charged a higher rate for supplies made by the Medical Stores. In view of the fact that the finances of the local bodies are very much crippled now, I hope the Hon. the Minister will consider this question seriously."

Diwan Bahadur B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU :—" Sir, it is a long standing grievance that the local bodies are forced to buy their medicines from Medical Stores at prices higher than what they would have to pay if they purchased their supplies from outside. Government cannot deny this. But the justification of the Government is that the supplies made by the Medical Stores are more guaranteed and are much better probably than what you can buy from outside source. To that objection I would answer by saying that Government would do well to give the option to local bodies to purchase either from the Medical Stores at a higher price if they would not give at a lower price or they should purchase their supplies from certain companies of good standing which are dealing in medicines. It is open to the Government to have a list of medical firms which deals with a supply of these, especially those firms who can guarantee for the quality of medicines they supply, and authorize the local bodies to purchase their needs from them or from the Medical Stores as they like. I mention this particularly now, because, as the Hon. the Chief Minister knows, the Medical Stores has to deal with a number of local bodies and Government having guaranteed the Government of India for payment the Surgeon-General and a large number of local bodies are compelled to purchase their stores from the Medical Stores. Possibly there might be some small local body where the president or somebody in authority might place his order elsewhere. But now that the taluk boards are going to be abolished and there are going to be a larger number of district boards—24 or more—the district boards ought to be given the

[Mr. B. Muniswami Nayudu] [23rd March 1934]

discretion to purchase their supplies either from the Medical Stores or from any recognized medical firm whose name is on the list of the Government. I think it is time that Government think over this matter seriously and allow a certain amount of option to local bodies to purchase their medicine either from the Medical Stores or from any recognized firm registered by the Government."

* Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"I request the Hon. the Finance Member to explain why this Demand for writing off Rs. 31,200 granted to the Nilgiris District Board should have been entered here. Of late there have been a few cases of mixing up these grants. If the Hon. the Chief Minister is perhaps the proper authority to move this grant, probably the question of his policy with regard to advances to district boards might become a subject-matter for discussion and then we may ask why of all district boards, the Nilgiris District Board alone should be singled out for this treatment. I want also to ask the Hon. the Chief Minister, whether, irrespective and independent of the Local Self-Government Department, the Finance Department has got powers to give compassionate grants or advance monies to local bodies. If that is so, what is the policy guiding such grants or advances. I may also ask the Hon. the Finance Member to explain the enigmatic language used in the last paragraph of the explanatory note relating to this Demand. There it is stated:—

'In order to enable it to repay the advance fully in the current year, it is proposed to sanction a compassionate grant of Rs. 31,200 to it of which a sum of Rs. 500 has been found from savings within the grant, leaving a balance of Rs. 30,700.'

"Evidently it means the Government want to write off the Rs. 31,200. Now from the language that is used it looks as though the district board is going to pay some thing and you are going to write off some other thing. Probably Accountancy rules require such enigmatic language. However I would like to know whether what I think is correct."

The Hon. Sir HOPETOUN STOKES:—"As regards those lines which the hon. Member refers to, I may say that they refer purely to a method of accounting."

* The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"The question of purchase of medicines from Medical Stores was gone into recently and it has been found, taking into consideration all the factors, that on the whole it is cheaper to purchase from Medical Stores. It has been found difficult and impossible to purchase all the medicines from one firm. Moreover some of the firms who tender for the supply of these medicines want to have an idea as to the probable quantities which we would purchase from them. Generally it may not be possible to say in advance what amount of drugs or other medicines which the local bodies require in a year.

"The other point raised by my hon. Friend, Mr. C. S. Ratnasabhapati Mudaliyar was that local bodies are charged 25 per cent more. They are charged only 10 per cent. The Medical Stores Department is

23rd March 1934]

[The Raja of Bobbili]

under the Government of India and it will not be possible for this Government to reduce that 10 per cent excess. If any district board president takes the trouble of sending us details as to the total amount of medicines that board would be purchasing, what it would cost and what probable savings would be effected if that board purchased their supplies from private firms, then the Government will certainly consider such cases. The difficulty is that the Government or the local body does not know what medicines they would be requiring, nor have they the means of knowing the market prices from time to time. It has been found on the whole that to purchase from Medical Stores is cheaper. It was also found necessary that there should be a safe check over these indents for medicines by the local bodies. However, if there are good firms who are prepared to supply medicines of good quality to the local boards, Government will have no objection to consider their case."

* Rao Bahadur T. A. RAMALINGAM CHETTIYAR :—" Sir, in the matter 12-15 of the purchase of stores and medicines there was no system under which p.m. all the local bodies had to buy their requirements. The local bodies bought wherever they pleased with the result there was a great deal of waste and some local bodies paid higher rates for their stores and some paid lower rates. It was also found that in the case of some articles the Government Stores Department was able to supply them at much lower rates than what the local bodies had to pay in the outside market. In view of this, it was proposed to bring into existence a central organization which will consolidate the requirements of the local bodies and purchase them wholesale. I do not know in what stage that proposal is at present. I request the Hon. Minister to consider that matter and see if it is not possible to bring into existence such an organization for this purpose."

Mr. P. V. KRISHNAYYA CHoudari :—" Sir, on the whole, it may be cheaper to buy from the Stores Department, because medicines containing alcohol such as tincture iodine are cheaper there as the Government do not pay any excise duty on alcohol. On the other hand the other medicines, the patent medicines for example, are more costly to buy from the Stores Department. If we exclude medicines containing alcohol, the other medicines are sometimes 100 per cent more costly in the Stores Department than in the local market. If necessary, I can give instances of various companies which supply these things much cheaper than the Stores Department. The Hon. Minister stated that they cannot have an idea of the total requirements of the various local bodies. What the taluk boards now do is to send a list of their requirements to the District Medical Officer who consolidates the requirements of the several taluk boards and sends them to the Surgeon-General. This gives us an idea of the total requirements of a district. Now, as we have abolished the taluk boards, the district boards can make a consolidated list of the requirements of the various hospitals and call for tenders from the various recognized firms. As the hon. Member, Mr. Muniswami Nayudu, suggested, the Government may have a list of recognized companies from whom alone the local bodies should take their requirements. As I said

[Mr. P. V. Krishnayya Choudari] [23rd March 1934]

before, except in the case of medicines containing alcohol, in the case of all the other medicines, the local bodies will save much if they buy from outside agencies instead of from the Stores Department. We are not anxious that the local bodies should buy from any outside agency except for the consideration of cheapness and saving of unnecessary expenditure. While the Government insist on the local bodies accepting the lowest tender in the other cases, I do not see why they should ask the local bodies to buy their medicines from the Stores Department where the prices in many cases are much higher than in other companies for medicines of the same quality. The Hon. Minister said that the local bodies have not got experts to test the quality of these medicines. But the Government themselves purchase the medicines from the companies when there is no stock in the Stores Department. Therefore it is desirable that the Government have a list of companies in whom they have confidence that they will supply medicines of the proper quality. That will solve this problem."

* The Hon. the RAJA OF BOBBILI:—"Sir, the hon. Member has not met the point mentioned by me. He has said that certain medicines are cheaper in the local market, but he has not given any indication as to whether he is satisfied that those medicines are of the same quality as those issued by the Stores Department. He has also stated that only mixtures containing alcohol are cheaper in the Stores Department but that the patent medicines are 100 per cent more expensive. (Mr. P. V. Krishnayya Choudari: 'In some cases.') As far as am aware, Sir, the Stores Department do not supply patent medicines. As regards the suggestion made by my hon. Friend, Mr. Ramalingam Chettiyar, that question was considered some time back but was dropped. Of course, I am not sure whether it will be more economical to have a separate organization for purchasing and stocking these medicines, because anyhow, the local bodies will not be able to buy in such large quantities as the Stores Department is able to do. We would have to maintain a special staff for the purpose and I am afraid, in the long run, there will be no saving. Mr. Krishnayya Choudari also asked: 'When the Government themselves purchase medicines sometimes from certain firms, why should not local bodies be allowed to do the same?' In the case of Government, they have facilities for testing the medicines purchased, but the local bodies have no such facilities. The other point which I have already mentioned is that these local bodies will buy only such small quantities that they will not be able to get the benefit of wholesale rates. I have also stated that if a district board is able to show that it can get guaranteed medicines of the same quality from outside agencies at much cheaper rates than those of the Stores Department, the Government will certainly consider the question."

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"I beg leave to withdraw my cut motion."

The motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

The Demand was put and carried and the Grant was made.

23rd March 1934]

GRANT XXXVIII—REFUNDS OF REVENUE—RESERVED AND TRANSFERRED.

* The Hon. Sir HOPETOUN STOKES :—“ Mr. President, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I move—

‘ that Government be granted a further sum not exceeding Rs. 1,89,400 under Grant XXXVIII—Refunds of Revenue—Reserved and Transferred.’ ”

The Demand was put and carried, and the grant was made.

V.—AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDER No. 80.

* The Hon. Sir MAHOMED USMAN :—“ Mr. President, Sir, I beg to present the Report of the Select Committee appointed to consider an amendment to Standing Order No. 80 ^a of the Standing Orders of the Madras Legislative Council and move that the report be taken into consideration.

“ This is a very simple amendment, the object of which is to allow any Member who proposes a change in the Standing Orders to be a Member of the Select Committee which will consider the amendments. In case the Member who proposes the amendment happens to be a non-official Member, it is provided that the Member of Government concerned should also be a Member of the Select Committee. It is a very simple change and I think it is necessary that this should be made.”

Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN :—“ I second it.”

The motion was put and carried.

The Hon. Sir MAHOMED USMAN :—“ I beg to move that the amendment be passed.”

Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN :—“ I second it.”

The motion was put and carried.

VI.—A BILL, TO FACILITATE THE WORKING OF CO-OPERATIVE LAND MORTGAGE BANKS IN THE PRESIDENCY OF MADRAS (BILL No. 5 OF 1933).

* The Hon. Mr. P. T. RAJAN :—“ Sir, I beg to move the following amendments which are merely verbal and formal in character :—

“ In clause 4 (2), in line 2, after the words ‘ issued by the Board,’ insert the words and brackets ‘ (including those issued before the commencement of this Act).’ ”

Mr. T. SUNDARA RAO NAYUDU :—“ I second it.”

The amendment was put and carried.

* The Hon. Mr. P. T. RAJAN :—“ I beg to move—

“ in clause 10, sub-clause (1), in line 2, for the figure ‘ 8,’ substitute the figure ‘ 9.’ ”

Mr. T. SUNDARA RAO NAYUDU :—“ I second it.”

The amendment was put and carried.

^a Vide Appendix IV at page 755 infra.